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VARIETIES OF IDEALIZATION AND STRATEGIES OF MODIFICATION OF SOCIAL THEORY. THE CASE OF THE TOTALITARIAN SYNDROME

ABSTRACT. Brzechczyn Krzysztof, *Varieties of Idealization and Strategies of Modification of Social Theory. The Case of the Totalitarian Syndrome* [Odmiany idealizacji i strategie modyfikacji teorii społecznej. Przypadek syndromu totalitarnego] edited by M. Adamczak – „Człowiek i Społeczeństwo”, vol. XXXIV, Poznań 2012, pp. 235-247. Adam Mickiewicz University Press. ISBN 978-83-232-2518-8. ISSN 0239-3271.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the influence of the methodological status of the concept of the totalitarian syndrome on the strategy of its development. It is argued that the totalitarian syndrome as put forward by Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski represented a kind of social modeling. However, there are different approaches to modeling in the social sciences. Modeling, when perceived from a neo-Hegelian perspective, leads to the elaboration of dependencies between social phenomena and their main factors. Modeling, when seen from a neo-Weberian perspective, relies on the construction of notions which systematize and order social phenomena. This hypothesis is illustrated by a methodological analysis of the extension of the totalitarian syndrome authored by Achim Siegel and Mark Thompson.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Idealization is gradually becoming a better and better recognized method of theory-building in philosophy and the methodology of science.¹ Out of many approaches to idealization, there are two that are the most popular in the social sciences, namely, the neo-Weberian and the neo-

¹ The draft of this article was presented at the special symposium *Varieties of Explanation* held at the IXth Polish Congress of Philosophy, Gliwice-Katowice-Wisła, 17-21 September 2012. The author wishes to thank prof. Theo A.F. Kuipers, the organizer of this symposium, for useful comments made to an earlier version of this paper.

Hegelian.² According to Leszek Nowak, in idealization as understood in the neo-Weberian mode it is presupposed that³:

- an empirically perceived empirical phenomenon under investigation is exaggerated (intensified);
- it is a built analytical notion that contains all the features of empirical phenomena in their extreme (minimal or maximal) intensity;
- empirical phenomena are confronted with ideal types and they are classified according to the criterion of their proximity (or distance) from an ideal type;
- if a given phenomenon is too distant from an ideal type, then the ideal type loses its applicability and is replaced by another one.

In contrast, idealization inspired by the Hegelian tradition relies on⁴:

- the construction of an abstract model of the phenomenon under investigation being deprived of some of its properties;
- the properties which remain being recognized as fundamental factors for the phenomenon under research and secondary ones being eliminated from the model where there is formulated a dependence between the phenomenon and its basic factors;
- in the next step, the secondary factors are gradually incorporated into the model and initial dependency is modified;
- obtained in this way the theory gives an explanation of the historical development of the phenomenon under investigation (e.g. society): in its first model a mono-linear development of the social system is usually assumed but its subsequent auxiliary models may present alternative paths of social development transforming the expanded theory into a multi-linear vision of development. In depending on the impact of the secondary factors incorporated into the model, the possible paths of development may be multiplied or reduced. Idealization perceived in the neo-Hegelian mode leads to an elaboration of the dependencies between social phenomena and their main factors. The most important aspect of idealization perceived in

² For more on the approaches of idealization, see: L. Nowak, *The Idealizational Approach to Science. A New Survey*. In: I. Nowakowa, Leszek Nowak, *Idealization X: The Richness of Idealization* (Poznań Studies in the Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities, vol. 69). Amsterdam/Atlanta: Rodopi 2000, pp. 109-110.

³ L. Nowak, *The Totalitarian Approach and the History of Socialism*. In: J. Frentzel-Zagórska (ed.) *From One-Party State to Democracy. Transition in Eastern Europe* (Poznań Studies in the Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities, vol. 32). Amsterdam/Atlanta: Rodopi 1993, pp. 46-47.

⁴ Ibid, pp. 48-49; L. Nowak, *A Conception that is Supposed to Correspond to the Totalitarian Approach to "Real Existing Socialism"*. In: A. Siegel (ed.), *The Totalitarian Paradigm after the End of Communism. Towards a Theoretical Reassessment* (Poznań Studies in the Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities, vol. 65). Amsterdam/Atlanta: Rodopi, pp. 91-108.

the neo-Weberian mode is the construction of notions which systematize and order social phenomena

Different interpretation of the methodological status of even this same social theory leads to different strategies of its developments. This thesis will be illustrated by the analysis of the extension of the totalitarian syndrome. In the second chapter, the main thesis of the totalitarian syndrome formulated by Brzezinski and Friedrich will be presented. In the third and fourth chapters, two ways of extension (in the neo-Hegelian and neo-Weberian way) of a totalitarian syndrome will be analyzed. The paper will be ended by conclusions.

2. THE CASE OF THE TOTALITARIAN SYNDROME

According to Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, this category does not explain the genesis of totalitarian systems but only the way of their functioning: "at the present time we cannot fully explain the rise of totalitarian dictatorship. All we can do is to explain it partially by identifying some of the antecedent and concomitant conditions. Broadly speaking, totalitarian dictatorship is a new development, there has never been anything quite like it before".⁵ Brzezinski and Friedrich claim that "totalitarian dictatorships, communist and fascist, are *basically alike*" which means "that they are *not wholly alike*".⁶ A totalitarian dictatorship consists of six traits like:

1. "an official ideology, consisting of an official body of doctrine covering all vital aspects of man's existence [...];
2. a single mass party led typically by one man, the »dictator«, and consisting of a relatively small percentage of the total population [...];
3. a system of terroristic police control [...];
4. a technologically conditioned near complete monopoly of control [...] of all means of effective mass communication [...];
5. a monopoly of control [...] of all means of effective armed combat;
6. a central control and direction of the entire economy".⁷

According to Brzezinski and Friedrich: "These six basic features, which we think constitute the character of totalitarian dictatorship, form a cluster of interrelated traits, intertwined and mutually supporting each other, as usual in »organic« systems".⁸ The authors warned against the consideration

⁵ Z.K. Brzezinski, C.J. Friedrich, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*. New York/Washington/London 1956, p. 7.

⁶ Ibid, p. 7.

⁷ Ibid, p. 9-10.

⁸ Ibid, p. 8.

of one distinguished trait as a fundamental, and qualification on the base of its possession by a given social system as totalitarian or not. For example, each state tends to establish a monopoly in the realm of the disposition of coercion but it does not mean that every state is totalitarian. The characteristic feature of such conceptualized totalitarian systems is their stability. Brzezinski and Friedrich claimed that there is no reason to conclude that existing totalitarian systems disappear as a result of internal evolution although no one can exclude this possibility.

The totalitarian syndrome describes adequately the fascist and communist dictatorships in Hitler's Germany in the years 1933-1945, in Stalin's Soviet Union in the years 1929-1953 and in countries (from 1945 to 1956) of Eastern Europe subordinated by the Soviet Union. However, the changes after 1956 which took place in the Soviet Union and other countries of the Eastern Camp: the condemnation of Stalin's cult, reduction of the labour camps, withdrawal from the mass repression and attempts of economical reforms, caused that the concept of totalitarianism was gradually losing its explanatory strength. In the 60s it was replaced by the modernization and convergence theory. It regained its popularity in the 80s when it was used by dissidents and organized opposition in countries of the Eastern Bloc.⁹ However, the collapse of the communist systems in the years 1989-1991 again undermined the adequacy of this concept. It is possible to point out the following standard objections put out against the totalitarian syndrome:

- the phenomenon of totalitarian dynamics – the totalitarian syndrome has a static character and does not grasp the internal developmental dynamics of communist systems;
- the phenomenon of the internal differentiation of communist systems in Eastern Europe – this concept equalizes all countries of the eastern bloc, neglecting their historical and cultural specificity;
- the phenomenon of de-Stalinization – how the disappearance of the mass terror that existed was possible in spite of the smooth functioning of these systems;
- the phenomenon of mass resistance – the model of totalitarianism does not explain how individuals – socially isolated in totalitarianism – are able to develop cooperation and resistance against an oppressive system;
- the phenomenon of organized opposition – this model does not explain how in such a repressive system dissidence and organized opposition could appear at all;

⁹ A. Siegel, *Introduction. The Changing Fortunes of the Totalitarian Paradigm in Communist Studies*. In: A. Siegel (ed.) *The Totalitarian Paradigm After the End of Communism. Towards a Theoretical Reassessment* (Poznań Studies in the Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities, vol. 65). Amsterdam/Atlanta: Rodopi 1998, p. 10.

- the phenomenon of reformism – if the defining feature of this system was its mono-party with one official ideology, then the appearance of Gorbachev and the attempts of reforms are unpredictable;
- the phenomenon of the collapse of communism – the concept does not explain at all this final stage of communism.¹⁰

3. ON TWO STRATEGIES OF THE MODIFICATION OF THE TOTALITARIAN SYNDROME

The strategy of the modification of the totalitarian syndrome depends on the interpretation of its methodological status. Therefore, it is possible to distinguish two strategies of the revision of the totalitarian syndrome which may be interpreted as:

- a change of the methodological status of the totalitarian syndrome, which means that this category is treated as an example of modelling in the neo-Hegelian mode instead of the neo-Weberian one;
- the maintenance of the neo-Weberian status of the totalitarian syndrome connected with its theoretical extension.

3.1. The change of the methodological status of the totalitarian syndrome

The example of the first strategy is a reinterpretation of the methodological status of the totalitarian syndrome made by Achim Siegel who claims that "six basic traits" of totalitarianism are not defining properties of the term »totalitarian dictatorship« but that they "might be easily understood as theoretical or empirical statements on the class of totalitarian dictatorship".¹¹ According to this author, the concept of the totalitarian syndrome may be interpreted as a functionalist-idealizational theory of the stability of the totalitarian control circuit. The six basic traits are the main factors which have an influence on the maintenance and stability of a totalitarian system. Besides these factors, Brzezinski and Friedrich distinguished secondary factors stabilizing and/or destabilizing the totalitarian control

¹⁰ L. Nowak, *A Conception...*, p. 91-91; M.R. Thompson, *Neither Totalitarian nor Authoritarian: Post-Totalitarianism in Eastern Europe*. In: A. Siegel (ed.), *The Totalitarian Paradigm...*, p. 305; P. Grieder, *In Defence of Totalitarianism Theory as a Tool of Historical Scholarship*, "Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions", 2007, no. 3-4, p. 565-584.

¹¹ A. Siegel, *Carl Joachim Friedrich's Concept of Totalitarian Dictatorship: A Reinterpretation*. In: A. Siegel (ed.) *The Totalitarian Paradigm After the End of Communism. Towards a Theoretical Reassessment* (Poznań Studies in the Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities, vol. 65). Amsterdam/ Atlanta: Rodopi 1998, p. 279.

circuit. The theory of the totalitarian syndrome is, therefore, based on the following idealizing assumptions neglecting the influence of:

A: the constitutional state institutions in a given country's history prior to dictatorship;

B: the international market and economical exchange;

C: the rising level of technological and industrial development;

D: the content of official ideology;

E: the international status of the society¹².

It leads to a reconstruction, reformulated by me, of the basic dependence of the totalitarian control circuit on syndrome factors:

(T) If in a given society the totalitarian control circuit has been established and the influence of secondary factors (A), (B), (C), (D), (E) is neglected, then the totalitarian control circuit is stabilized by the syndrome's main factors¹³.

In Siegel's reconstruction of Brzezinski/Friedrich's concept, the six basic features of the totalitarian system fulfil two functions: they are the main factors influencing the stability of a totalitarian dictatorship and they are the defining features of the term "totalitarian dictatorship". The idealizational status of totalitarian dependency causes that it does not refer directly to any empirical totalitarian system because none of them would satisfy all the assumptions A, ..., E. Nevertheless, it may serve as a point of departure for the formulation of a more detailed thesis and derivative models referring to empirical societies. Siegel concretizes his totalitarian dependency thesis by replacing the assumption E with two others:

E-1: a given totalitarian society is taken in isolation (it is neither a province nor a metropolis of an empire);

E-2: a given totalitarian society is engaged in competition (confrontation) with non-totalitarian countries.

It leads to the following concretization of the basic theorem T:

(T.1) If the totalitarian control circuit has been established in a given society and the influence of secondary factors (A, ..., D and E-1) is neglected, then the totalitarian control circuit is stabilized by the syndrome's main factors and is destabilized by the confrontation of a totalitarian society with non-totalitarian ones.

¹² Ibid, p. 284-285.

¹³ Siegel's original formulation is the following: "If in a given country the totalitarian control circuit has been constituted and if we furthermore assume conditions described by (A), (B), (C), (D), (E1) and (E2), then the totalitarian system in question develops towards a state of system equilibrium so that further significant changes in the system's structure are excluded" (ibid, p. 285). I changed this original formulation because the version modified by me is better suited to the research purposes of the paper.

According to Brzezinski and Friedrich, in the light of Siegel's reconstruction not each international configuration destabilizes the totalitarian dictatorship. The interpreted authors claim that peaceful co-existence with democratic societies would strengthen a totalitarian dictatorship, whereas confrontation or an open war conflict between totalitarian and non-totalitarian states would weaken a totalitarian system.

Being a part of larger a totalitarian structure exerts another impact on the stability of a dictatorship in a given country. Removal of the assumption *E-1* leads to a distinction between satellite and metropolitan totalitarian countries. Brzezinski and Friedrich claim that the level of anti-totalitarian resistance is higher in those societies where the totalitarian system was imposed from outside. In this case, the resistance is strengthened by patriotism and offended national dignity.

However, the metropolitan status of a given totalitarian country (it is my extension of Siegel's considerations) strengthens the totalitarian dictatorship due to the influence of such consciousness factors like the pride of citizens in the international prestige of a country. Therefore, the assumption *E-1* may be replaced by two others:

E-1-A: a given country has a satellite status;

E-1-B: a given country has a metropolitan status.

This concretization leads to the following modification of the theorem *T*:

(T.2) If the totalitarian control circuit has been established in a given society and the influence of secondary factors (*A*, ..., *D*, *E-1-B*, *E-2*) is neglected, then the totalitarian control circuit is stabilized by the syndrome's main factors and destabilized by the satellite status of the considered society.

(T.3) If the totalitarian control circuit has been established in a given society and the influence of secondary factors (*A*, ..., *D*, *E-1-A*, and *E-2*) is neglected, then the totalitarian control circuit is stabilized by the syndrome's main factors as well as the metropolitan status of the considered society.

The way of reconstruction proposed by Siegel allows for assuming through the theory of the totalitarian syndrome a linear or star-shaped structure. In the theory with a linear structure, each next secondary factor is introduced to the last concretized statement of the theory.

Let us illustrate this remark. The level of anti-totalitarian resistance is reinforced by the satellite status of a given country (assumption *E-1-A*) and the content of imperial ideology (assumption *D*) because its nationalistic or chauvinistic motives presenting satellite citizens as "worse" than metropolitan citizens strengthens the resistance of the satellite country. The theory assumes a linear structure when each next factor is introduced to its last concretized statement:

(T.4) If the totalitarian control circuit has been established in a given society and the influence of secondary factors ($A, \dots, C, E-1-B$, and $E-2$) is neglected, then the totalitarian control circuit is stabilized by the syndrome's main factors and it is destabilized by the satellite status of the society and the chauvinistic content of the imperial ideology.

In the star-shaped structure of the theory, the influence of the satellite status of a given society and the content of imperial ideology on the stability of the totalitarian dictatorship is considered separately. Therefore, an assumption $E-1-B$ is removed (but assumptions $A, \dots, D, E-1-A$ and $E-2$ are still in a force) and the influence of the satellite status of the society is considered. Then, the assumption $E-1$ is restored but an assumption D is removed. Therefore, the second concretized statement describes the influence of ideology on the stability of the totalitarian dictatorship. One obtains two concretized statements:

(T.5.1) If the totalitarian control circuit has been established in a given society and the influence of secondary factors ($A, \dots, D, E-1-B$, and $E-2$) is neglected, then the totalitarian control circuit is stabilized by the main syndrome factors and it is destabilized by the satellite status of the society in question.

(T.5.2) If the totalitarian control circuit has been established in a given society and the influence of secondary factors ($A, \dots, C, E-1$ and $E-2$) is neglected, then the totalitarian control circuit is stabilized by the syndrome's main factors and it is destabilized by the chauvinistic content of the ideology.

The reconstruction presented above allows for distinguishing the secondary factors stabilizing and destabilizing a totalitarian dictatorship. The particular configuration of the latter decides on the durability of the totalitarian dictatorship and the different routes of the detotalitarization of empirical societies.

3.2 Theoretical extension of the totalitarian syndrome

Another research strategy is the neo-Weberian interpretation of the totalitarian syndrome leading to the building of the whole sequence of ideal types. This strategy was adopted by Juan Linz who constructs ideal types of totalitarian and authoritarian society¹⁴. A totalitarian society was to be characterized by:

¹⁴ Modification of Linz's approach, see: R. Bäcker, *Teoretyczne implikacje zmodyfikowanej definicji totalitaryzmu Juana Linza*. In: K. Brzechczyn (ed.), *Ścieżki transformacji. Ujęcia teoretyczne*

- one monistic centre of power;
- an official ideology;
- its ability of social mobilization;
- a charismatic leader.

In contrast an authoritarian society is characterized by:

- a plurality of decision-making centers localized in the state bureaucracy;
- traditionalism and conservatism;
- social passivity;
- a leadership limited by legal and customs norms.¹⁵

Such a constructed pair of ideal types allows for the classification of particular societies and to follow their evolution during a chosen period. For example, Poland in the 50s was to be closer to a totalitarian system but in the 80s – to be closer to an authoritarian one. However, both political systems in Poland during Gierek's and Jaruzelski's reign as well as the political system in Spain during Franco's reign were termed »authoritarian«. Yet, the differences between both countries were too visible in order to use for them one common notion »authoritarian«. In Spain there was a private economy, ideological and worldview pluralism and the freedom of civic organizations. In Poland there was a planned economy, and the lack of social freedom and official ideology. The differences between both countries were so great that they undermine the usefulness of the application of this category to the political systems in both countries.

In the 90s Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan introduced a third type of political system: the post-totalitarian, which was different from the totalitarian, and authoritarian systems¹⁶.

Post-totalitarianism differs from authoritarianism by the lack of civil society destroyed by the totalitarianism, the presence of an official ideology and mobilization practices, although they have a very ritualized form. Political leadership is exercised in a collective way and not by a charismatic leader. This typology was the inspiration for Mark R. Thompson analyzing European and non-European communist societies. He claims that "Euro-

i opisy empiryczne (Poznańskie Studia z Filozofii Humanistyki, vol. 21), Poznań 2003, pp. 207-209.

¹⁵ J.J. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*. In: F.I. Greenstein, N. W. Polsby (eds), *Handbook of Political Science*, Cambridge 1975, pp. 175-411.

¹⁶ J.J. Linz, A. Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe*. Baltimore 1996, more expanded typology of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, see: U. Backes, *Was heißt Totalitarismus? Zur Herrschaftscharakteristik eines extremen Autokratie-Typs*. In: K. Stokłosa, A. Strübind (eds), *Glaube-Freiheit – Diktatur in Europa und den USA. Festschrift für Gerhard Besier zum 60. Geburtstag*, Göttingen 2007, pp. 609-625.

pean transitions from communism appear to falsify totalitarianism theory, while non-transitions outside of Europe seem to verify it; is paradoxical only if we limit ourselves to the alternatives of totalitarianism and authoritarianism. It can be better understood why communism perished in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union but survived elsewhere if a third regime type, »posttotalitarianism«, is added to the analysis”¹⁷.

Figure no. 1. Differences between totalitarian, post-totalitarian and authoritarian systems

Totalitarian	Post-totalitarian	Authoritarian
Monolithic center of power	A pluralism of decision centers – higher than in the case of totalitarian regimes	A pluralism of decisive centers of power
Official ideology	Official but ritualized ideology	The lack of official ideology
Social mobility	Lower social mobility	Social passivity
Charismatic leader unlimited by norms and political traditions	Political leadership is less limited than in the case of the leader in a totalitarian system	Political leadership limited by certain arbitrary accepted norms and traditions

According to Thompson, in East-Central Europe there was a transition from communism in its post-totalitarian version to democracy but it is not possible to pass directly from totalitarian communism to a democratic system. Democratization has to be preceded first by a transition from a totalitarian to a post-totalitarian version of communism. This transition is the result of such factors like the death of a leader, the introduction of a collective leadership and an economic crisis. The authorities in post-totalitarian systems are in a visible way weaker than the authorities in totalitarian ones. Thompson attributes to this the impact of such factors like the ageing of the leadership, routinization of ideology, spreading of cynicism, opportunism and the career-making attitude in the party apparatus and in the whole society. Thompson concludes that communism in its post-totalitarian version was more prone to collapse than communism in the totalitarian version. These differences should explain why North-Korean communism still lasts, whereas the Hungarian one has already collapsed. However, regional variants of communism’s collapse in East Central Europe require further refinement of the category of post-totalitarianism. Thompson introduced six sub-types of such post-totalitarian systems:

¹⁷ M. R. Thompson, *Totalitarian and Post-Totalitarian Regimes in Transitions and Non-Transitions from Communism*. “Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions”, 2002, vol. 3, no. 1, p. 80.

– early post-totalitarianism – is distinguished according to its timing because it is not far remote from totalitarianism. It is characterized by an abolishment of the cult of personality, party purges are halted and there is a rehabilitation of the victims of terror. The society experiences an economical growth resulting from the removal of obstacles and barriers of central planning. Early post-totalitarianism was in Yugoslavia after the break of Tito with Stalin, and in the Soviet Union in the years from 1953 to 1964, Eastern Germany, 1953-60, Hungary 1953-1956, Czechoslovakia, 1953-1968, and China 1978-1989;

– frozen post-totalitarianism – is characterized by an abandonment of political reforms, repressions towards opposition, and the elimination of party reformers from power structures (Soviet Union, 1964-1986), (Eastern Germany, from the second half of the 60s to 1989, Czechoslovakia, 1968-1989). Frozen post-totalitarianism can evolve into a hybrid, paralyzed and sultan post-totalitarianism.

– hybrid post-totalitarianism is based on the combination of political repressions with economical concessions given to society (Hungary 1956-1988, Yugoslavia in the 70s, China after 1989),

– paralyzed post-totalitarianism – the power is in the hands of the enemies of reform, who are not able, however, to repress effectively opposition nor introduce reforms of their own (Eastern Germany and Czechoslovakia in 1988-1989); the collapse of this system is caused by social protests;

– sultan post-totalitarianism is based on the cult of personality, of a leader who has reinforced totalitarian tendencies (Romania);

– mature post-totalitarianism is characterized by the consciousness of the ruling elite that a certain level of political liberalization is a necessary condition of economical reforms which are to save the economy from long-term crisis (Hungary in 1988 and Poland in the years 1988-1989).

The author has formulated some merit thesis. Namely, the direct transition from totalitarianism to democracy is impossible. This is the case of North Korea, and Cuba – which represent a mixed type of frozen and sultan post-totalitarianism. Different sub-types of post-totalitarianism are characterized by different levels of susceptibility to democratization:

– the early post-totalitarianism is the least susceptible to democratization because of economical growth, the effectiveness of the leadership and the attractiveness of the ideology;

– frozen post-totalitarianism is characterized by a similar low probability of evolution in the direction of democracy;

– the hybrid post-totalitarianism is characterized by a high level of susceptibility to democratic evolution, which grows when it evolves into mature post-totalitarianism.

The blockage of possibilities of negotiations in paralyzed post-totalitarianism caused that systemic change could occur only by the way of social protests (Czechoslovakia, Eastern Germany, and Bulgaria) which enforced democratization. In turn, the domination of a reformist faction in the power hierarchy of mature post-totalitarianism caused that transition occurred by the way of negotiations (Poland, Hungary).

It is possible to reconstruct the trajectory of the evolution of some countries:

Early – Frozen – Hybrid – Mature – Negotiated Collapse (Poland, Hungary)
 Early – Frozen – Paralyzed – Collapse by Social Protests (Czechoslovakia, Eastern
 Germany, and Bulgaria)
 Early – Frozen – Sultanic – revolution (Romania)

Mark Thompson explains also why Gorbachev's perestroika was not successful. The Soviet leader tried to "jump" from the frozen to the mature stadium of post-totalitarianism, omitting the hybrid stadium. It caused that Soviet economic bureaucracy had little experience in the reforming of the economy in conjunction with political liberalization. Moreover, Gorbachev did not understand the mechanisms of the free market. On the one hand, he rejected too radical plans of market reforms and on the other, his efforts of reforming the system was obstructed by conservative fractions in the power apparatus.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Let's summarize our considerations. The two modifications of the totalitarian syndrome presented above have assumed a different methodological status. Achim Siegel interprets the totalitarian syndrome as an idealizational-functional theory. The basic dependency of this theory has a form of a conditional period. In the antecedent of the basic statement of this theory, factors destabilizing the totalitarian control circuit are omitted. In consequence, it is shown how the syndrome factors stabilize the totalitarian control circuit. Different directions of concretization may transform the core of totalitarian theory in the ramified theoretical structure, which is able to show the speed of detotalitarization and the factors which accounted for the dissolution of dictatorships in particular countries.

In turn, Mark Thompson treats the totalitarian syndrome as a certain ideal type. In the first step, he assumes a distinction between the totalitarian and the post-totalitarian type of society. In the second step he constructs six

different sub-types of a post-totalitarian society. However, this strategy may be severely criticized:

- the criterion of division (in this case of different sub-types of post-totalitarianism) remains unknown;
- defining features of each subtype of post-totalitarian system are chosen very often in an *ad hoc* and accidental way¹⁸;
- there is a lack of characterization of the mechanisms of evolution from one type of post-totalitarianism to another.

Maybe, the disadvantages of the approach described above come from the author's limited research purposes. His purpose was not to build a general classification of post-totalitarian systems which satisfies the requirement of logical division but to distinguish only such sub-types of post-totalitarian systems which would be useful in the research of empirical societies.

However, this analysis seems to prove that neither the neo-Weberian nor the neo-Hegelian approach to idealization is a basic barrier in the grasping of social dynamics. It only proves that these dynamics may be modelled in a different way in dependence on methodological, often silently accepted, assumptions.

¹⁸ E. gr.: "»Frozen« post-totalitarianism is defined by its political temperature. The political climate has grown colder after heated experimentation is abandoned" (ibid, p. 87).